multi-lateral cooperation to check and counter terrorism and several institutional mechanisms have been developed towards this end. These, *inter-alia*, include Home Secretary Level Talks with Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Bhutan, Joint Working Groups (JWGs) on Counter Terrorism with 25 countries and 2 regional groups *viz.* European Union (EU) and The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economical Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Agreements on Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLATs) in criminal matters with 22 countries, and Extradition Treaties with 26 countries.

Further, India is an active member of the Global Coalition against terrorism and it is a signatory to all UN Security Council Resolutions on counter terrorism and is an active partner in all UN measures to combat the menace of Global Terrorism.

Telephone tapping

*114. DR. V. MAITREYAN: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that selective category of persons are being subjected to telephone tapping across the country;

(b) if so, even the politicians who are mainly senior functionaries of the opposition party are being subjected to telephone tapping;

(c) if so, the reasons for this type of phone tapping exercises undertaken across the country; and

(d) the basis on which the people are selected for this type of telephone tapping?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL): (a) to (d) Under the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 and the rules made thereunder, the Union Home Secretary in the Government of India and the Secretary, in-charge of Home Department in the case of State Governments can allow interception of messages in the interest of sovereignty and integrity of India, security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order and for preventing incitement to the commission of an offence. There is a strict legal and administrative regime to ensure that this power is exercised only as per the said provision.

Hike in cement prices

*115. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the supply of cement in the country has been affected and its prices have gone up recently;

(b) if so, the increase in the prices of cement registered during the last one year, month-wise, and the impact thereof on the construction industry;

(c) whether the Builders Association of India has protested by announcing stoppage of construction activity in the country against unfair business practices of cement manufactures; and

(d) if so, the action taken/proposed to be taken by Government against cement manufacturers and the steps taken by Government to bring down the prices of cement?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) The production and despatches of cement have been increasing every year. The total production of cement was 127.57 million tonne, 141.81 million tonne, 155.66 million tonne and 135.83 million tonne in 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 (April 07-Jan. 08) respectively. The average price of cement has increased sharply from Rs. 158/- per bag in December, 2005 to Rs. 225/- per bag in March, 2007, but thereafter it has largely stabilized showing an increase of only 2.67% between March, 2007 and January, 2008. The details are given in the Statement (*See* below). Any increase in the costs of inputs like cement, steel etc. will have a consequential impact on the construction industry.

(*c*) and (*d*) The Builder's Association of India have represented against alleged cartelization by the cement manufacturers. The Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Commission (MRTPC), a quasi-Judicial body, is already seized of the matter. The Government has taken a number of measures to increase the supply of cement in the market. These include facilitating import by reducing the import duty on cement to 'Nil', removal of countervailing duty and special additional customs duty. Further, MMTC Ltd., a Government of India enterprise, TANCEM, a State Government enterprise of Tamil Nadu and M/s Puducherry Agro Services Industries Corporation (PASIC) have been given a special dispensation to import cement under the provisions of Cement (Quality Control) Order, 2003 to enable availability of significant quantities of imported cement in the market. With these measures, the average price of cement has stabilized to a large extent showing an increase of only 2.77% between March, 2007 and January, 2008.

Statement

The percentage of increase in the prices of cement registered since December, 2005

Year	Month	Average Price in Rs. per bag	Increase in Price since Dec., 2005	Percentage increase in price since Dec., 2005
1	2	3	4	5
2005	December	158		
2006	January	163	5	3.2%
	February	175	17	10.8%
	March	189	31	19.6%
	April	199	41	25.9%
	May	200	42	26.6%
	June	201	43	27.2%
	July	201	43	27.2%
	August	201	43	27.2%

1	2	3	4	5
	September	202	44	27.8%
	October	205	47	29.7%
	November	208	50	31.6%
	December	209	51	32.3%
2007	January	209	51	32.3%
	February	212	54	34.2%
	March	225	67	42.4%
	April	226	68	43.0%
	May	226	68	43.0%
	June	227	69	43.7%
	July	229	71	44.9%
	August	231	73	46.2%
	September	231	73	46.2%
	October	231	73	46.2%
	November	231	73	46.2%
	December	230	72	45.6%
2008	January	231	73	46.2%

Naxal violence in Orissa

†*116. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Orissa has been a victim of terrible naxal violence in the recent past;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the details of assistance sought by the State from the Centre to deal with this problem;

(d) the kind of assistance provided by the Centre so far; and

(e) the year-wise details of loss of life and property due to naxal violence during the last five years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL): (a) to (e) Details of naxalite incidents in Orissa in the last 5 years are as below:

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.